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playing at cards, or settling with mine host. When he exaggerates he seems to do it without effort, and the most mirth-provoking pictures of his pencil—the solemn gravity of the boor lighting his pipe, the vain attempt of the peasant to hide his uneasiness while under the hands of the village barber—are perfectly natural and true. The jovial tavern-keeper, Jan Steen, is noted for the same cheerful view of common life; he gives us the same jolly boors, regaling at the same sort of beer-houses, finishes with the same detail, copying with the closest attention brass pans, and earthenware, and well-thumbed cards and drinking-cups, uniting with his artistic skill all the elements of genuine comedy. And among these faithful delineations of rustic scenery and peasant life, the two *Ostades* are deservedly recognised—Adrian, the eldest and the most celebrated; and Isaac, sometimes called the king of light and shadow.

To the career of this latter painter we have before referred—how he was born at Lubeck; was sent when very young into the low countries; received instruction from his brother Adrian; travelled to the banks of the *Zuider Zee*, and settled at Amsterdam, “where he attained,” says one of his biographers, “the summit of art.”

The engraving which we now present is from one of the well known paintings of this master, and represents a “Road-side Inn.”

A country cart has stopped before a village hostel, and without alighting, the driver is refreshing himself with a comfortable draught, the hostess having brought him forth a pitcher of the strongest brew; three or four neighbours are lounging round the cart, an old man sits on the top of a tub with a dog half asleep at his feet, while the fowls from the poultry yard are picking up blades of scattered corn. The scene is very simple, perhaps vulgar; yet the eye rests upon it with pleasure. The painting is a Flemish picture more than two hundred years old, but its charm has not departed—its beauty and freshness still remain! Why? Because the picture is true: it awakens happy thoughts of bygone scenes, calls up old memories deep and tender, and we regard that episode in village life, that simple group, that rustic quietness, with pleasure, because we have somewhere looked upon what might have been the original of the picture. The grateful shadow of those tall trees, the picturesque beauty of the road-side inn, its swinging sign, its thatched roof, the creeping plant that climbs upon it, the company of villagers, the still water, the reeds that grow up long and dark upon its margin, the trees far away, over which the village spire is peeping, and the lowing kine driven forth to pasturage, all combine to make the picture interesting to the observer. It is not simply what

it represents, but the pleasing sensations which it awakens within us. There is poetry in the whole design, poetry that belongs to all time, that does not represent a particular period or a particular place—not a burgomaster of the sixteenth century, or a street in Amsterdam—but that reproduces nature, and nature never grows old.

One might draw a nice distinction between the two words—*truth* and *reality*. They are not to be accepted as synonymous. Modern painters have sometimes confounded them, and the result has been a school of Reality, the disciples of which have copied nature, line by line, and have failed to be true after all. They have represented things as they are: have not brought either judgment or taste to bear upon their study, but have been content to reproduce nature under aspects the most common and inartistic. They have toyed over trifles, have been diligent students of minutiae, have forgotten the beauty of the garden in the animalcules on one of the leaves, have overlooked the majesty of a river in the close imitation of the prism-coloured dew-drop, and in many instances have sacrificed all the true essentials of art to an unnecessary exactness in these minor points. This may be real, but it is not what may be emphatically called true.

Truth in art enters into the grandeur of the whole design, and into the poetry of nature. It looks for effect and not for detail; it admits choice and preference, and allows the judgment to be exercised in the selection of subjects, and the taste in arranging them. The artist is not content to represent every object as it presents itself to him on the first glance; he regards them in the most favourable light, uses discretion in the grouping of his figures, and at his pleasure introduces this tree and omits that. He claims the privilege of the poet, and artificial in the means which he employs, is true in the result which he effects.

This is not a subtle disputation about words,—it is the expression of two systems; one produced Titian and Raphael, and the other the lowest painters of the Flemish school. The students of the “Realistic” school paint as though nature was always beautiful alike, as if the mission of the artist and that of the photographic camera were the same in their end and purpose, and as if a picture was to be produced by an exact transcript of nature without choice and almost entirely by hazard. But the true mission of art is higher and better and nobler than this. Art supposes that its devotee should possess something more than an ability to execute—that he should have tact to seize only on those subjects most worthy of study, that he should accept or reject at his will, and that he should reproduce upon his canvas those images only which merited to be transmitted to posterity.

BURNET.

We have on more than one occasion remarked upon the fact that pictures are at once expressions of the thought of the artist and appeals to the feelings of the spectator. And yet a picture does not fulfil its office when it leaves nothing untold. If there remains nothing for the imagination to shadow forth for itself, nothing for the mind to ponder over, it is little better than mere imitation. It is one of the highest triumphs of genius to convey all its meaning while expressing only a part of it. How successfully this has been done by many of our own great artists we need not say. Wilkie has taught many a solemn lesson, and written many a piece of humour rich and pathos deep upon his canvas. There may not be any great variety of detail in the scene he pictures,—it may be one of humble life,—but there is a moral in every line, that he who runs may read. What a sermon lies in his “Young Postboy!” What warning, instruction, and tenderness in the confusion of the lad, and the anxious look of his grandmother!

The picture, an engraving of which is before us, is another of those which suggest its meaning with beautiful distinct-

ness; but only suggests it, and leaves all the rest to our own imagination. Let us see what it tells us.

There has been a long and severe storm on one of our coasts. For days the sea has been fretting itself against the rocks in impotent fury. Seaward, a sierra of foaming waves, black clouds, and driving rain. At intervals, vessels have been seen in the offing, tearing madly through the storm under doubly reefed topsails, and those on board must have been bold hearts if they did not shudder as they looked towards the land, that loomed upon them so frowningly, so sternly. All along the grassy brow of the cliffs, white wreaths of foam lie like woolpacks, or are swept inland to disappear on some flooded field. Great bundles of sea-weed are found on all the paths by the shore, lying where the sea cast them from it in its fury. The eagle, whose nest is in the cliff, screams hoarsely and savagely as she leaves it in the morning, and more savagely as she returns at night, for this tempest is even more than she can enjoy. There is nobody stirring abroad, the fishing-boats are hauled up high, though not dry, upon the beach; every house in the village has its door shut

fast, and blazing fires of wreckwood make the inmates comfortable.

But down in one rude cabin near the shore matters have not been so cozy. Every blast has made the old smoky rafters shake and tremble; the rain has penetrated the thatch at a hundred places, and falls in regular and constant drops on the floor; it oozes in, too, by the crevices in the badly-joined casement of the window. The thunder roars distantly at intervals, and the lightning sends occasional flashes through the gloom. The youngsters are frightened, and crouch round their mother; but she, good woman, heard not the raging of the storm, or the dash of the rain. Her heart is light within her, and she sings gaily as she goes about her household duties; for her husband is not at sea, but snug at home, mending his nets and smoking his pipe, and waiting patiently for the return of fair weather. She remembers what fearful nights of watching and anxiety she has passed when a gale had caught him far from land; how her heart throbbed and her limbs trembled when the boom of the minute guns of a vessel in distress has come dismally on the blast, and the hoarse dash of the remorseless surge was mingled with the melancholy whistling of the wind through the chinks of the old door. She remembers how, breathlessly, she listened for his footstep; and she remembers with what anguish she watched the morning dawning on the stormy sky, and the troubled sea, and still no Dermot returned; and she is happy in contrasting her present quiet with her past alarms. And yet, even now, she has cause for sorrow and vexation. Before evening the storm has cleared off, but it has left many a trace behind it. The thatch, the straw for which cost them so much but six months ago, has been torn off their cabin; the potatoes on which they relied for subsistence during a considerable part of the year have had their stalks broken by the wind, and many of them are blasted by the lightning; the woodbine and the rose-tree, which had twined so gracefully round the door, are battered and torn, and bent and bruised; the little plot of flowers, sheltered from the sea breeze by a thick hedge, which was her pride and the delight of the children, is covered with pieces of stone and rubbish, and the flowers, the gay, pleasant, and sweet-scented flowers, are lying dead. The children are roaming about outside, lamenting over the ruin and desolation which meets their view; when, lo, and behold, in a great lump of thatch which the wind has swept off the roof, they find a nest, lined with down and hay carefully interwoven, and in it lay three fledglings; but, alas! the cold and wet had killed two of them, and one alone survived, to gape feebly for food at the sound of a chirp. But its mother, poor thing, has fled away towards the blue sky, with sorrow in her heart, and will never, never more return. The children nurse the little orphan and carry it in. Their mother prepares a little warm feather bed for it by the fire, where it can rest snugly, secure from danger; and the rough fisherman himself, whose heart is soft and tender as a maiden's, has made a little skewer to offer it bread and milk upon; and to the delight of the two boys it arouses itself, cats, and is merry. The family are present at all its meals; are enchanted to see it extend its little beak for more, and to flap its half-clothed wings.

In two or three days the thatch is repaired, the garden is cleared of the rubbish, and the flowers resown; the potatoes begin to revive; the rose and the woodbine are once more nailed to the wall, and once more begin to smile as they "were wont to smile." All the damage is repaired, and the storm is forgotten, but the fisherman has not forgotten to point out to his children the moral of it all—to remind them each time they rejoice over their pet that it was the storm which brought it them, with all the pleasure it gives; and that God never fails to intrude some leaven of happiness into the worst calamities he sees fit to inflict upon his creatures.

Allan Cunningham gives the following account of the life and works of Burnet:—

Art has its early victims, as well as poetry. Chatterton and Kirke White gave no greater promise of excellence in verse, than did Bonington and Liverseege in painting. To

these names we may add that of James Burnet, a young landscape painter of no common powers. He was born at Musselburgh in the year 1788, and was the fourth son of George Burnet, general surveyor of excise in Scotland, a man of probity and talent, and Anne Cruikshank his wife, sister to the eminent anatomist, the friend and associate of John Hunter. Others of his house have attained distinction: his brother, John Burnet, is as widely known for his talents in original composition with the pencil as for his almost matchless skill with the graver. The family came originally from Aberdeen.

The instruction which Burnet received at school during the day was excellently followed up in the evening by that of his mother, a devout and prudent woman. There are few of his countrymen who derive not as much of their knowledge from their father's fireside as from the public schools. His mind took an early turn towards art; during his leisure hours he loved to walk into the studio of Scott, the landscape engraver, with whom his brother John was a pupil; nor was he long in lifting the pencil; the result of his attempts was, that he was put under the care of Liddel to learn wood-carving, at that time a profession both lucrative and popular. This branch of art, indeed, is now nearly extinct; a love of what is plain has come upon the country, and carved chairs, couches, and cabinets, are expelled from parlour and drawing-room; our cornices and architraves are no longer ornamented, and festoons and flowers flourish no more on our walls.

During his apprenticeship, Burnet studied at the Trustees' Academy, under Graham, where he was noticed for the natural truth of his delineations. As his skill of hand increased, he began to perceive the limited nature of the art of carving in wood. He sent some of his compositions to his brother John, who had removed to London; expressed a wish to follow and devote his time to painting; and without waiting for a letter of encouragement, which was on the way, he left Edinburgh, and arrived in London in the year 1810, in the twenty-second year of his age. He found his brother busied on his fine engraving of Wilkie's inimitable "Blind Fiddler." He stood and looked earnestly and long on the picture; he had seen nothing so full of character, or so finished in all its details, during his studies in the North. A new light, he said, broke upon him, and from that moment he resolved to alter his style of drawing. In this resolution he was confirmed by examining the works of the best Dutch masters in the British Gallery. In them he perceived much of what he admired in Wilkie: he lost no time in making attempts in what ought to be called the natural, rather than the Dutch style. "So convinced was he," said one who knew him intimately, "of the little progress he had made in colouring, and the other essentials which are everything in the department of the art he had chosen, that he may be said to have only then commenced his studies; so little applicable is an academical education to the humbler and picturesque walks of art."

In Wilkie and the Dutch masters he perceived something entirely after his own heart: he loved the vivid human character in the former; and of the latter, Potter and Cuypp became his favourites. He desired to unite their qualities; and while he studied their mode of handling their subjects, and endeavoured to look on nature with their eyes, he was perfectly aware that nothing short of originality of conception would lead him to distinction. He had sought what he wanted in the Academy, but found it not; he therefore determined, like Gainsborough, to make nature his academy; and with a sketch-book and pencil he might be seen wandering about the fields around London, noting down scenes which caught his fancy, and peopling them with men pursuing their avocations, and with cattle of all colours, and in all positions. Of these sketches I have seen a vast number; some are rude and ill-arranged; others display bits of great beauty and character; the greater number are such as he probably intended to paint pictures from; for the scenes are generally well depicted, and the sentiment plainly expressed. Of cattle he seems to have been particularly fond, and has represented them in all possible postures, and of all hues—"The ring-straked, the speckled, and the

spotted." He also seems to have been a judge. Some of our cattle painters, imagining that the more flesh cows have the more milk they will give, have plumped them up into a condition for the butcher, but not for the milk-pail. Burnet knew that a moderately lean cow produced most milk, and in this way he drew them. But in all that he did he desired to tell a story. This he knew would give interest to his works, and produce at the same time action, expression, and variety. Nor did he confine his studies to the fields alone: he made himself familiar with the indoor as well as outdoor economy of a farmer's household during seed-time, summer, harvest, and winter; he left no implement of husbandry unsketched, and scarcely any employment of the husbandman without delineation.

The first fruit of all this preparation was his picture of "Cattle going out in the Morning." There is a dewy freshness in the air; and the cattle, released from their stalls, seemed to snuff the richness of the distant pastures, and acknowledge the loveliness of the day. His next picture was superior even to this: in his "Cattle returning Home in a Shower," purchased by Sir Thomas Baring, "he has introduced," says an excellent judge, "everything that could in any way characterise the scene. The rainbow in the sky, the glittering of the rain upon the leaves, the dripping poultry under the hedge, the reflections of the cattle on the road, and the girl with her gown over her shoulders, all tend with equal force to illustrate his subject." This picture placed him in the first rank as a pastoral painter. Others followed of equal or superior truth and beauty: such as his—1. "Key of the Byre;" 2. "Crossing the Brook;" 3. "Cowboys and Cattle;" 4. "Breaking the Ice;" 5. "Milking;" 6. "Crossing the Bridge;" 7. "Inside of a Cow-house;" 8. "Going to Market;" 9. "Cattle by a Pool in Summer;" 10. "Boy with Cows." Some of these are in the collections of the Earl of Coventry, the Earl of Egremont, and the Marquis Camden; others are in the possession of the painter's relatives. A very fine one, "The Boy with the Cows," belongs to James Wadmore, Esq., and hangs worthily with the Wilkies and the Turners, and other masters of the calling.

I have said that he sketched and studied much in the fields. He felt that the excellence which he coveted could not be obtained on more moderate conditions. It was also his practice to write down on the spot his own observations regarding the future handling of the picture in oil: these are both curious and numerous, but their scope and aim are so interwoven with the landscape to which they relate, that few of them will be understood separate. I find the following memoranda regarding distances—"Extreme distance ought generally to be of the same tint as the sky with which it unites; and as it approaches the middle ground, the strata appear interspersed with touches of light and dark, such as the lights upon the tops of houses with their shadows. Be particular in marking the buildings with a firmer line than the trees: never admit colour into your distance when in the direction of the light; scumble a little with purple and grey at the bottom of your objects, losing their forms at the base. In a side light, the objects are coloured where the light shines upon them, while the shadows are all of one tint: even red is grey in the shadow; but when the light is behind you, every object is made out with its proper colour." The same clear, simple mode of instruction distinguishes all he says regarding the treatment of that unstable element, water. "To paint water well, it ought, if possible, to be painted at once with a full pencil and a quantity of vehicle: the colours reflected in water appear more pleasing from their possessing a rich pulpy substance, and also from their sweetly melting into each other. In painting water, particular attention should be paid to the place and distance, as it alters much according to the situation. Objects near the foreground raise their reflections strong when they touch aught, but are often lost when they come to the bottom of the picture; while, on the contrary, objects in the distance show their reflections stronger as they approach towards you. This arises from the waves conveying the reflection being larger, and less under the influence of perspective than when they touch the distant object."

Burnet is equally plain and explicit on the subject of "sky;" as his remarks are the offspring of his own observations, I shall give the student all the advantage which can be derived from them. "The sky being of a receding character, all those points which contribute to give it such character should be the study of the painter. Mere white, for example, will seldom keep its place in a sky, but it ought to be used in foreground objects for the purpose of giving a retiring quality to the whites in the sky and distance. Softness of form also aids in giving the sky a retiring character, although it is necessary to give a little sharpness to prevent the sky appearing what is termed woolly; yet very little is sufficient to give firmness to the whole. Clouds are much more opaque in the north than in the south, as the light shines upon them in the one situation and through them in the other. Their form alters much, too, according to the time of day: at noon they are round, and more like those of Wouvermans; in the evening they are more like those of Cuyp or Both, especially about an hour before the sun goes down." Besides remarks originating in the contemplation of nature, there are, in his school-books, observations on some of the landscapes of our greatest masters. Under the date of May, 1814, I find the following memoranda concerning the pictures of Richard Wilson in the British Institution:—"I observed some pictures more pleasing than others; those which seemed most so were light pictures with warm foregrounds falling into a cool sky and a distance, the middle ground mostly in shadow of a purple grey, with yellow and green touches through it; a piece of blue drapery in the foreground gives great value. Of all things, Wilson seems careful to keep a proper balance of hot and cold colour, and of light and shade, with very little positive colour, and little of black or white, but always some of each."

But whilst this young painter was noting the excellence of Wilson, or watching the shifting colours of the sky and the changing hues of nature, he was sensible that a disease which flatters while it destroys was gradually gaining upon him as ice upon the stream, and robbing him of his vigour, bodily and mental. He still continued his excursions among the fields; the consumption from which he was a sufferer made him feel the beauty more deeply of solitary places: he was to be found often in secluded nooks; and the beautiful churchyard of Lee, in Kent, near which he, in his latter days, resided, was a place where he frequently wandered. But change of air and scene brought no improvement to his health; his looks began to fade; he could scarcely take his customary walk in the fields, or use his note-book and pencil. He is still remembered about Lewisham and Lee as one who was to be found in lonely walks making sketches. His cheerfulness never forsook him; he loved to talk with his friends concerning art; and at times, when he forgot that his days could be but few, he spoke of landscapes which he had planned and resolved to execute. On finding that death was near, he desired his brother John to bury him in the village church of Lee, which forms the background of several of his studies, and resigned himself calmly to his fate. He died on the 27th of July, 1816, aged 28 years. His dying request could not, it seems, be complied with; parochial etiquette forbade the burial of a stranger, even of genius, in the church of Lee, and he was interred in the churchyard of Lewisham.

James Burnet had a fine eye, and an equally fine feeling, for the beauties of landscape: his knowledge of nature was extensive and minute; he had watched the outgoing and incomings of shepherds and husbandmen, had studied flocks and herds, and, as the memoranda which we have quoted show, had made himself intimate with much that lends lustre to landscape. It was his custom, in country places, to watch the cows going to pasture or returning home; to look to the manners and practices of the cowherds; nor did he sometimes hesitate to loiter amongst the cottages, and observe through the lighted up windows the employments or amusements of the peasantry. To such feeling for the rural and picturesque, he added an excellent eye for colour; he could employ at will either the bold deep tones of Rembrandt, or the silvery and

luminous tones of Cuyp. To those who know the difficulty of guiding the eye from one extreme to another, this will be deemed great praise. He had considerable poetic feeling: there is nothing coarse or common in his scenes: his trees are

cows lean, his shadows too dark, and said his sheep with their torn fleeces seemed creatures dying of the rot. Those who are acquainted with country scenes, and with flocks and herds, may smile at some of these remarks. Under a fat cow



THE ORPHAN BIRD.—FROM A PAINTING BY BURNET.

finely grouped; his cows are all beautiful; they have the sense to know where the sweetest grass grows; his milkmaids have an air of natural elegance about them, and his cowboys are not without grace.

[Of his defects the critics of his day spoke; they called his

a milkmaid will think it nearly labour lost to place her pail; and sheep which graze among briars and thorns cannot fail to show dishevelled fleeces. No doubt he had defects; but what were they compared to the great natural truth and beauty of his delineations?]